

Never in the history of farming have farmers had more reason for concern, and never has the government seemed to show less concern. Dairy farmers encounter the same difficulties as do other farmers. They suffer from lack of markets for their products. Selling is partly the job of the government. In spite of what we hear, dairy farmers also suffer from the failure of the government to check rising production costs.

There is certainly no lack of efficiency on the part of our farmers. No one can tell me farmers are not efficient, because I know better. In times like these, they have to be efficient in order to operate. The truth is that they have proven themselves to be more efficient than almost any other business or industry. One handicap is the lack of research into new methods of purchasing and packaging—something which the federal government could and should be doing.

It is obvious that the policy of the government has been to eliminate the small, and—in their language—the inefficient farmer. The government and its various spokesmen talk about uneconomic units. What right have they to judge a farmer's efficiency, from here on Parliament Hill? Is it not a farmer's right to adhere to his way of life whether or not the Department of Agriculture or the Dairy Commission, or the government feels his unit is uneconomic?

I might also ask: Who benefits from a farmer's efficiency? Certainly it is not the farmer himself. Yet there are people who feel he should be moved to our already overcrowded cities where he would risk becoming a real burden to taxpayers in general. We should remember that when we discuss the problems of dairy farmers we are also dealing with many related industries whose operations depend upon the prosperity of the dairy industry. I am amazed by the kind of remarks I hear about subsidies being paid to dairy farmers or, for that matter, to any farmers. When will people realize that if farmers do not get a reasonable return for their labour they must either get out of business or be subsidized. They do not like being in this position. They are forced into it by circumstances beyond their control. How else do people suppose that food remains cheaper in relation to income on this continent than anywhere in the world? If small farmers are phased out and corporations take over, food prices will skyrocket.

Small farmers are going out of business at an alarming rate today and few young men

Support Price for Manufacturing Milk

are replacing them. Under the dairy policy for 1968-69 new farmers could not get a subsidy quota unless they bought one along with a herd. Few young men can afford to do this. I ask this question, Mr. Speaker: Is there anything wrong with mixed farming? Should a farmer not be able to start on a small scale and ship cream, which fits in with hog and poultry raising, and possibly with a beef and grain operation as well?

What about the position of fluid milk shippers operating on a small fluid quota? It is agreed that a dairyman must now get between \$4 and \$5 per hundredweight in order to operate. Today the minister quoted a price of \$4.85. Many of these people are averaging less than \$4 per hundredweight. They have huge sums invested and they produce high grade milk. Where do they turn? Not to shipping manufacturing milk; they cannot get a subsidy quota. What about fluid milk shippers who might be forced out of business when processing plants close down? Where can they turn?

Subsidies are paid to some fluid shippers—this surprised me when I heard it—on certain amounts over 125 per cent of fluid quota here in Ontario and in British Columbia. I realize that the milk is pooled, but this procedure was not spelled out in the dairy policy statement this year, or in the previous one, as far as I can recall. This is creating an acute problem in the minister's own area. Fluid shippers have large sums invested. How does the action now being taken fit in with the policy of eliminating small farmers? I am referring, now, not to small shippers but to the top producers.

Never before in history has there been such confusion and dissatisfaction among dairymen respecting subsidies. This is borne out by the great number of letters received by all hon. members who have dairymen in their constituencies. They have many causes for complaint. For example, a young dairyman just starting out shipped more than the minimum 420 pounds of butterfat. The head office of the plant concerned mistakenly submitted a figure below that amount and he was automatically phased out. No recourse was open to him even though the mistake was not his. This is not the fault of the Dairy Commission. They have always been most helpful and reasonable, Mr. Speaker. But, after all, the commission is responsible to the department.